

# Currents

Newsletter of University Lutheran Church, March 2025



OUR LENTEN JOURNEY BEGINS  
ASH WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5  
5:30 PM WORSHIP  
FOLLOWED BY MEAL

# Pastor Letter

## Welcome to LENT

Wednesday, March 5, is Ash Wednesday, marking the beginning of the holy season of Lent. This is time set aside for being intentional about spiritual practice and deepening our relationship with God, as we prepare for the great festival of Easter, and the holy week before it. As part of this preparation, we might give up something for Lent, or add a discipline, rearranging “the usual” to make space for a practice that deepens our communion with Christ. The three traditional practices of Lent are prayer, fasting, and sacrificial giving, particularly in caring for the poor.

Our theme for Lent this year is Reconciliation, which we will explore in worship, daily prayer, and educational forums. We continue our Wednesday evening services at 5:30 pm, followed by a free meal. We'll be doing Dinner Church again, combining food, liturgy, prayer, and fellowship in one event (lower level dining room). I will also be providing a schedule of Bible readings and prayers for each day. And on Sunday mornings after worship, we'll explore ways we see reconciliation in our own lives and world— or not, including looking at the Bible stories we're reading each week. There are many ways to observe Lent. You can sign up for daily devotions by email, use a devotional booklet, such as Forty Days and Forty Nights by Gail Ramshaw (we bought several of these reusable devotionals a couple years ago), or develop your own practice around prayer, fasting, and sacrificial giving. Search online— there's a lot out there, for all ages! In any case, I encourage you to take advantage of this time the church has carved out to try something new as you discover more about who God is, and who you are as one of God's beloveds.

### **Worship schedule: Wednesdays**

March 5, Ash Wednesday service, 5:30 pm, meal following

March 12 & 26, April 2 & 9, 5:30 pm Dinner Church, lower level dining room (combined meal + liturgy for Lent)

**\*\*NOTE: NO Wednesday service during spring break, March 19**

### **Sundays, 10 am, Holy Communion**

We'll be singing a new liturgy, “Sighs Too Deep”, a commission from several Twin Cities area ELCA congregations, composed by Rev. Tamika Jancewica, Rev. Emilie Casey, and musician Anne Krentz Organ. This expansive language liturgy was inspired by the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women, the 40th anniversary of the ordination of women of color, and the 10th anniversary of the ordination of LGBTQIA+ leaders in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), as well as the ELCA's newly published social statement entitled Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action. The work began just after the murder of George Floyd. The expansiveness of the language makes room for gender, sexuality, race, and culture in ways that traditional words have not done previously.

### **Sundays, 11:15, educational forum**

We'll be exploring Reconciliation in a variety of ways this Lent in our conversations and learning, including Bible studies of the weekly readings and topics including confession and forgiveness, the Reconciling in RIC, and the ELCA's Truth and Healing movement with Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations.

*Pastor Lori*

# MINISTRY NEWS

## SPRING SCHEDULE

Our regular weekly schedule is:

Mondays: 4 pm, Q&A at The Bridge  
(Davies, 2nd floor)

5:30 pm PRACTICE Spirituality,  
Insta Live

Wednesdays, 5:30 pm evening prayer  
6:00 pm free meal

Sundays, 10 am worship, followed by  
coffee and educational forum

Click [HERE](#) to sign up to cook Wednesday meals this semester.  
Contact the office if you need help signing up. Thank you!



# Gracefully Welcome

Wednesday evening meal signup spots are filled until Ash Wednesday. Appreciate Joanne's help with setting up Sign Up Genius and keeping an eye on sign ups. I also sent out a personal request for help with a meal. It's been challenging. Wondering if there is a better way.

Would making teams from regular worship attendees and having teams sign up throughout the year be a better way? Has that been done in the past? There could be one experienced person on each team. Would it help people become acquainted? Where would I proceed with that idea for next year?

Sunday morning coffee continues with sometimes people signing up, and sometimes people just bringing what they might have. First planning meeting for spring finals week meals is coming up in March.

~ Joyce Anderson



To check dates and sign up for a Wednesday meal this spring, click [HERE](#). Contact the office if you have questions.

ULC Office

# Joyfully Serve

Several of our Beacon House regular volunteers provided the meals for residents January 30 - February 1st. There were seven adult residents that week, and 14 children from infants through age 14.

Our former Good Neighbor Team members have been among those particularly concerned about how the halt to Federal assistance funds for recently arrived refugees is affecting the families served locally by World Relief. In the past couple weeks, at least three team members: Carol Rudd, Marie Murrell, and Sara Bryan, have signed up to volunteer in the World Relief office during their recently established "Employment Office Hours."

According to the handbook provided by World Relief, these volunteers will "Assist WR clients with their employment needs such as completing job applications, making follow-up calls, and tracking their job search, under the direction of WR staff."

~ Sara Bryan on behalf of Carol Rudd

A flyer for World Relief Wisconsin. At the top, it says "world relief" with a logo of four hands holding a heart, and "WISCONSIN" below it. The main heading is "DONATION NEEDS". Below this, there is a list of needs: "HOUSEHOLD GOODS", "gently used FURNITURE", and "AMAZON WISH LIST". To the right of the list is a QR code. Below the QR code, it says "(scan the QR code or go to <https://a.co/grfswr>)". At the bottom, it says "To donate items, contact Jodi Jewell [jjewell@wr.org](mailto:jjewell@wr.org)".

## Learn & Grow



At the end of summer, our final Wednesday night gathering included a conversation with Mercedes Falk, director of Puentes/Bridges and farm worker and fellow Puentes member Roberto. We invited members of Newman's Peace & Justice group to that gathering. Earlier this month, ULC members joined members of that Newman group for a discussion of Ruth Conniff's book *Milked*, which tells the story of Puentes (and much more).

Read an update on Puentes/Bridges—including a recent trip to Mexico--in Ruth Conniff's new article in the *Wisconsin Examiner* <https://wisconsinexaminer.com/2025/02/24/amid-trumps-threats-to-deport-workers-wisconsin-dairy-farmers-travel-to-mexico/>

~ Kate Hale-Wilson

## Thankfully Worship

### Lenten Worship schedule: Wednesdays

March 5, Ash Wednesday service, 5:30 pm, meal following

March 12 & 26, April 2 & 9, 5:30 pm Dinner Church, lower level dining room  
(combined meal + liturgy for Lent)

**\*\*NOTE: NO Wednesday service during spring break, March 19**



FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Tuesday, March 25

7:00 pm

Riverside Theater

## THE BODY'S RAPTURE

Written and Performed By  
Shannon T.L. Kearns

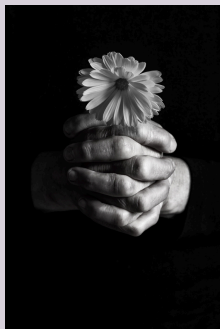
Directed by Paul W. Kruse



A transgender man talks about growing up in religious fundamentalism. This one person show, performed by the playwright, is a journey through evangelical pop culture of the 90's telling stories of fear, first love, theatre, and what comes next.

Sponsored by GSRC, REGSS, Music & Theater, and University Lutheran Church.

**GRIEF CIRCLE: SPONSORED BY  
NEWMAN PARISH, EAU CLAIRE  
Spring 2025**



**SIX WEEK SERIES MEETING:**  
March 25 and April 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29  
Tuesdays: 6:00PM – 8:00PM  
Ecumenical Religious Center  
110 GARFIELD AVE. Eau Claire, WI 54701  
Everyone in the Chippewa Valley is  
welcome to participate.

This group provides a safe place for those experiencing grief and the loss of a loved one. It is a time of learning about grief and the opportunity to share your thoughts, feelings, and concerns with others who understand.

The facilitators, Laurie Hittman and Sue Ripp, have experienced the death of parents, a sibling, a child and friends. The support of others on the same journey can provide a great deal of comfort and healing.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO  
REGISTER CONTACT:**

Laurie Hittman 715-379-4110  
jlhittman1@jlhittman.com

Sue Ripp 715-829-3822  
sueripht@charter.net

**REGISTRATION DUE BY March 11, 2025**

## **More info on Fr. Kearns' visit**

ULC and LSA are co-hosting an event in anticipation of Transgender Day of Visibility (March 31). This program will feature a guest visit by Father Shannon Kearns, a transgender ordained priest in the Old Catholic Church. Fr. Kearns is an author/playwright, Biblical scholar, and host/founder of the podcast "Queer Theology," which provides workshops, publications, and online community for LGBTQ+ Christians.

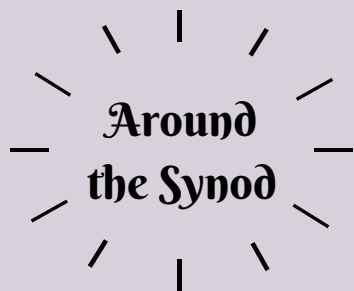
As part of Fr. Kearns's visit, he will perform his one-person show, *The Body's Rapture*, on March 25 at 7 pm at the Riverside Theatre. *The Body's Rapture* shares his lived experiences of being both trans and a person of faith, traits positioned as antithetical to one another in transphobic religious and political discourse. During Fr. Kearns's visit, students and the broader UWEC community will have several opportunities to learn from and interact with him, including his presence at our Wednesday worship service March 26. Learn more about Fr. Kearns and his work at these sites:

<https://www.shannontlkearns.com/about/>

<https://www.queertheology.com/about/>

<https://www.instagram.com/queertheology/>





**GO! MAKE DISCIPLES!**

**WALKING TOGETHER**  
MARCH 22, 2025  
BETHANY LUTHERAN - RICE LAKE, WI

**\$25 PER PARTICIPANT**

**REGISTRATION:**  
<https://nswwi.org/walking-together-epic>

**REGISTRATION DEADLINE**  
March 14, 2025

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**EcoFaith Summit of the  
Upper Midwest  
April 5, 2025  
Duluth, MN**

Co-sponsored by The Northeastern Minnesota Synod EcoFaith Network, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, and Saint Paul Area Synod. Follow this link for more information:

<https://www.ecofaithnetwork.org/ecofaith-summit-2025>



**Synod Council opening**

The Chippewa Valley Conference, of which we are part, will provide a female-identifying synod council member to be elected at Synod Assembly, April 26. If you are interested in serving the church in this way, please email the office and we will nominate you!

**Director of Children, Youth  
and  
Family Ministry  
Position Opening**

St. John's Lutheran Church  
1804 Main St, Eau Claire

Click [HERE](#) for position description



WELCA Women's Chippewa Valley Conference  
Day of Renewal



# ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE

**Saturday, April 5, 2025**  
**8:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

**St John's Lutheran Church**  
**1804 Highland Avenue**  
**Eau Claire, WI 54701**

**Registration & Refreshments**  
**8:00 - 9:00 AM**

### Program

-Joyce Orth from Fierce Freedom, speaks about the realities of domestic human trafficking and how to raise awareness of it.

-Kim Peach and Karen Morris from Bethesda Lutheran speak about the love and joy of giving and accepting help.

-Delight in the young voices of St. John's Sunday School!

Cost: \$25 per person (payment required with registration, no refunds)

Lunch is included in the cost of registration. Please check below if you require a gluten-free meal.

**Send checks and registration forms to:**

**Kris Nelson**

803 11th Street, W. Home: 715-835-6830  
Altoona, WI 54701 tina\_nel@yahoo.com

**Please make checks payable to WELCA**

*Kris Nelson, Penny Erickson & Holly Sweeny of the Chippewa Valley Conference Team would like to extend an invitation to three to four volunteers to step up and lead next year's Day of Renewal. We have put together a folder of information that helped us organize this year's event. Making this conference happen was truly rewarding. It is a great way to make new friends and experience fellowship amongst others.*

**Please return this form with your payment by March 24th.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Church and City: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check here if you require a gluten-free lunch



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## March

- |             |                   |  |
|-------------|-------------------|--|
| March 5     | 5:30 pm           | Ash Wednesday worship & meal   |
| March 9     |                   | Culture Fest, UWEC Davies Center   |
| March 17-21 |                   | UWEC Spring Break, no Wednesday worship  |
| March 17-23 |                   | PL vacation  |
| March 22    | 8:30 am - 4:00 pm | Walking Together, Bethany Lutheran, Rice Lake.<br>Click <a href="#">HERE</a> for registration information. |
| March 25    | 7:00 pm           | “The Body’s Rapture”, Riverside Theatre, UWEC  |
| March 27    | 6:30 pm           | Church council meeting   |

## April

- |            |          |   |
|------------|----------|---|
| April 4, 5 | 7:00 pm  | Viennese Ball, UWEC Davies Center. Click <a href="#">HERE</a> for ticket information. |
| April 13   | 10:00 am | Palm Sunday worship   |
| April 17   | 5:30 pm  | Maundy Thursday worship   |
| April 18   | 5:30 pm  | Good Friday worship   |
| April 20   | 10:00 am | Easter worship  |
| April 24   | 6:30 pm  | Church council meeting  |

## May

- |       |          |                |
|-------|----------|----------------|
| May 4 | 11:00 am | Annual meeting |
|-------|----------|----------------|

See our [calendar](#) for more ministry and event information

## ULC Ministry Contacts

**Gracefully Welcome, Joyce Anderson, Chair**  
715-577-1397  
joyce4334@gmail.com

**Joyfully Serve, Carol Rudd, Chair**  
715-456-1936  
cjrudd1@charter.net

**Learn & Grow, Dr. Kate Hale Wilson, Chair**  
715-829-8620  
kate\_hale@me.com

**Thankfully Worship, Dave Anderson, Chair**  
715-577-1798  
prdavea@gmail.com

## ULC Staff Contacts

**Rev. Dr. Lori Ruge-Jones, Pastor**  
715-834-8026  
pastor@universitylutheran.org

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Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

## Council Contacts

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